

# Town Meeting



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## Does Television Enrich American Home Life?

Moderator, TAYLOR GRANT

*Speakers*

ERNESTINE GILBRETH CAREY

RALPH HARDY

DONALD HARRINGTON



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## Does Television Enrich American Home Life?



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### THE SPEAKERS' COLUMN

**RALPH W. HARDY**—Director, Department of Government Relations, National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters. Associated with the NARTB since 1949, he was born in Salt Lake City in 1916 and educated at the University of Utah. Following his graduation, from 1935-37, he served as a voluntary Mormon missionary in Europe. Returning to Utah, Mr. Hardy took a job at Station KSL, Salt Lake City, continuing at the same time an active leadership in the Mormon Church. At KSL, he was successively an announcer, continuity writer, staff editor, producer, account executive, traffic manager, program director, executive assistant in charge of public affairs and finally, assistant manager. In 1947 he was named chairman of the NARTB's first Educational Standards Committee. He became director of the Department of Government Relations in February, 1950. Aside from the NARTB, Mr. Hardy is professionally affiliated with the Association of Better Business Bureaus, the Advertising Advisory Committee in the Department of Commerce, Committee on Activities in the United States of the U. S. National Commission on UNESCO and the University Association for Professional Radio Education.

**ERNESTINE GILBRETH CAREY**—Co-author of *Cheaper by the Dozen* and *Belles on Their Toes*. Mrs. Carey graduated from Smith College, where she specialized in English and economics. At Smith she edited their monthly literary magazine and was humor editor of the yearbook. The next fifteen years were spent at R. H. Macy as a buyer for several departments including adult games and artists' materials. Until recently, she was cosmetic and drug buyer for another New York department store. Mrs. Carey now has "retired" to full time home life, combining it with writing and lecturing. She is married to Charles Everett Carey, has a son and a daughter.

**DONALD HARRINGTON**—Minister of the Community Church of New York. Born in Newton, Mass. of "an old New England family," Donald Harrington determined in his second year of high school to become a minister of religion. He attended Antioch College and the University of Chicago (B.A. 1936) and also studied at the Meadville Theological School of Chicago (B.D. 1938). During these two years he served as minister of the First Unitarian Church of Hobart, Indiana. In 1938, he was awarded the Cruft Traveling Fellowship which took him to Europe as a graduate student in the University of Leyden. The following year he married the

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# Does Television Enrich American Home Life?

## Moderator Grant:

If there is virtue in a moderator's being strictly neutral, I believe I can qualify in tonight's discussion. My life at the present time is divided between an American home and radio and television. What happens in both these spheres is, of course, of great concern to me personally. It is of concern to all of us who have opened new doors into our homes—doors which can never be shut again any more than Pandora could close her box—so there's little point in sighing for the good old days when we listened but could not look.

And if a picture is worth a thousand words, we must be even more concerned with the pictures we bring into our homes than with the countless words that have streamed out of our radios all these years. Perhaps our first concern should be for those willing guinea pigs, the children of this first TV generation. But the open door of the lighted television screen is there for young and old alike. The advantage and the danger of television is that it is so accessible, demanding the minimum of effort on the part of the viewer. *Academy Magazine*, devoted to the arts and sciences of radio and television, very properly thought the time had come last fall to ask, "How Can Television Enrich American Home Life?"

Donald Harrington, Minister of the Community Church of New York, took a very dim view of what television is doing to American home life. He said it is impoverishing it. We hurled his challenge at Ernestine Gilbreth Carey, who collaborated with her brother to write *Cheaper by the*

*Dozen and Belles on Their Toes*, and she rose quickly to its defense.

To round out the picture, we asked Ralph W. Hardy, Director of the Department of Government Relations for the National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters, to come from Washington tonight so that all sides of the problem could be considered. We have also asked two parents to serve as guest interrogators. We'll come to them a bit later in our program. But first of all, I would like to ask Mrs. Carey, if I may, why she is so enthusiastic about television as it comes into her home on Long Island where she lives with her husband, her son and daughter.

## Mrs. Carey:

I feel very enthusiastic, indeed, about television because we know, in our own family life, that it's given us joy and a chance to realize important opportunities. First of all, television brings the impact and importance of the outside world right into our home and in turn, I believe, it makes our life together that much more realistic and meaningful. Of course I'll agree that once you do own a television set, there are certain problems that have to be faced; but many of these problems can be eliminated at the very beginning if the family council has taken up the matter of television just as it has taken up other matters, such as allowances, or the purchase of a new car, or possibly the getting of a new dog.

And it seems to me that if everything is considered very carefully, then, once the television is bought, most of the trouble has already been eliminated and from



that point on it is pretty easy going. Of course, there is always this matter of how much time should the family give to television and also what programs does each person want to see. But again if that can be discussed and voted upon through the family council, it doesn't become a special problem; it just becomes one of those problems where we all put our minds together on it.

I think this is a very important point because again it gives us a chance right within our own families to practice the fact that rights and responsibilities go hand in hand and, if for no other reason, therefore, I think the challenging problems presented by television to family life are very worth while.

**Mr. Grant:** Thank you very much, Mrs. Carey. Now Mr. Harrington, you are also the father of a son and daughter and your years in the ministry have, I am sure, taken you into many homes. Why are you so bitter about television in the American home and do you have television in your home, Mr. Harrington?

**Mr. Harrington:**

The question is not *could* television enrich the American home; the question is *does* television enrich the American home? I am one of those who believe quite strongly that if television were adequately programmed and seriously programmed, and if the people as a whole could discriminate and were taught in their schools through discussions how to discriminate, in selecting programs, television might conceivably enrich the American home.

But today I say it very definitely does not, and I think that my whole experience with people in our American homes and my own people in my own congregation

and other congregations would bear me out in this. I see television as a disruptive influence in the sense that it gets in the way of the most precious thing that happens in the American home, or in any home for that matter, and that is the interpersonal relationships, the give and take between father and children, between mother and children, so far as the every-day affairs of life are concerned.

I might cite, for example, the way it interferes with the supper hour. One of the interesting things that has to do with television, and I might say I had a set for two months and had the courage to get rid of it, (*applause*), one of the ways that it interferes is that it is almost impossible ever to set a table for supper in which someone isn't terribly aggrieved that his program has been interrupted. The consideration of the whole family is virtually out the window.

Now, of course, some families settle this as one of my friends in the ministry settles it. I happened to be calling on him the other night (one of the leading ministers in this area), the children were nowhere to be seen and when I asked him where they were he pointed out to a little porch. The porch was dark. The children were sitting at a card table in front of the television set eating their supper in the dark. Well, that's one way, I suppose, of solving the problem.

There is no question to my mind that television is a disruptive influence in this sense and in the sense that it gets in the way of people's sharing with one another. The real victims, of course, are the children. The children whose minds are influenced by these endless chains of mysteries, crime

stories and all kinds of violence, as well as the inane and empty humor shows, which characterize most of the evening fare. So I say television today is *not* enriching the American home. (*applause*)

**Mr. Grant:** Thank you very much. That is, of course, another very interesting side of the story but there is a third side, and an exceedingly important one. It's coming to you from the father of five children, who since 1947 has worked with that professional watch dog of the radio and television industry, the National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters. Mr. Hardy is also affiliated with the University Association for Professional Radio Education and serves on the Committee on Activities in the United States of the US National Commission on UNESCO. From a professional point of view, then, let's have your opinion on whether or not television enriches American home life, Mr. Hardy.

**Mr. Hardy:**

Certainly it's perfectly obvious to every parent in a home where a television set has come that a new era in American family life has dawned. The answer as to whether television is enriching American home life or impoverishing it, I suspect, rests in each individual home. There are those who take the view, which I felt my associate beside me took just a moment ago, that it is inevitable that the children must rule, their tastes must direct, and that parents must relinquish their long standing rights to control what is seen and what is heard in the home.

It was not too long ago that I was asked a similar question of this type by a committee of the Congress. Before I could answer

the question, one of the members of the Congress said, "Why don't you turn the blankety-blank thing off as a very effective way of controlling it?" But I think we must look beyond that. What was the situation in the American home before the advent of radio, and, more specifically, before the advent of television? Have you stopped to consider the tremendous recruiting facility of television? Where children formerly spent most of their time away from the family, they are now, usually, at least in my home, pretty well clustered around that particular spot. Now I recognize that television is tremendous competition in any home.

Snap it off abruptly and watch the faces of your children as they look at you as if to say, "Well, what are you going to do now instead of having us watch television?" And I suspect it is that aspect of the problem that's got most parents worried. It has me worried, but we think we can handle that problem in our home and take advantage of the tremendous richness of the world outside that television is bringing into the family which we have in our home. (*applause*)

**Mr. Grant:** Thank you very much, Mr. Hardy. So far it would seem to me that our speakers appear to be agreed only on the point that television has created the dawn of a new era. Mrs. Carey, what you had to say seemed to be in almost direct conflict with everything Donald Harrington said, and I think now you'll have a moment or two to refute, if you wish.

**Mrs. Carey:** I'd like to ask Mr. Harrington a question. It's my feeling that once a television comes into the home it has to stand up



in competition against the other leisure time interests in that family, and it seems to me that if television is so glamorous that it dominates everything else, and if the interests of pre-television days seem suddenly to go dead, then I wonder if that isn't a very important sign to parents, a sign that parents need to review themselves and that situation and try to inject new magic into home activities exclusive of television, so that again they have the attraction for the children that they should have.

**Mr. Harrington:** Well, yes, I should say that they should bestir themselves, that they should do these things, but I would like to ask you if you think they're going to. As a matter of fact, the hypnotic charm of television is so great that I think it is likely to overcome most parents' ability to cope with the problem.

In the homes of my childhood and yours, children learned how to play instruments, for example. We had a little trio in my family. One played the piano, I played the violin, my sister played the cello and we created music. We had little writing projects in the family and we sometimes wrote poems and stories. We worked together in the workshop, we *did* things, we worked together in a creative way. In the modern family, you sit side by side, yes, but you are not together. You're way off in a studio somewhere and your physical proximity doesn't seem to me to make very much difference so far as the real human activities of life are concerned.

**Mr. Grant:** Mr. Hardy, with your five children do you find problems of that kind? And how are you coping with them?

**Mr. Hardy:** We do find them, Mr. Grant. And let me be per-

fectly candid and confess that we haven't found all the answers in our home yet. We still have to walk in occasionally at the appointed dinner hour—and that is when father gets home from the office—and issue with somewhat bellowing tones the order, "Turn off the television set!" Now it has taken some spankings and some other things to let them know that we mean just that—turn it off.

Being sympathetic to children sometimes I realize that it's pretty tough, just as the gang is coming down the road with horses thundering, to switch it off not knowing whether the heroine falls off the cliff or hangs on; but we've learned that our children are pretty responsive, because we've found ways of rewarding them with selective listening which we have picked out for them, perhaps at later hours or other times, which they cherish a great deal. So I believe there are devices of handling that.

**Mr. Grant:** Well, Mr. Hardy, I know this conversation could probably dwell on how to handle television and the children at the same time for quite some time. I imagine, though, that you in your field must also be asked many questions about the actual impact of television on the American social scene. Has it become a major form of leisure activity, for example? Has it interfered with theater and movie going and reading and other habits?

**Mr. Hardy:** I think the answer is, yes, that there has been a very marked impression that television has made on all other activities, but there again I don't know that it has been bad. If I read correctly, for example, what's happened in the moving picture business, it has turned the attention of movie producers to the means to produce

better movies that will have better box office appeal and bring people to them.

By the same token, as I read of the gatherings of magazine publishers and newspaper people, the question is, what do we do now with the presence of another great new medium for the transmission of communication? I think the general effect is going to be an upgrading of all of them, because competition in every other form of life tends to produce that very effect.

**Mr. Grant:** Mr. Harrington, do you think that any particular age group—getting away from children again for the moment if we can—do you think any age group within the family rely on television as a leisure-time activity except the children? Do you think that there are any benefits that it might have for older people or others?

**Mr. Harrington:** Yes, I think there are very real benefits for older people, especially people who are house bound. Once again, if the programs were a little bit more adequately prepared for such people, so that their purposes could be served, the programs would meet that need a whole lot better than they do. My main objection, really, is to the way the programming seems to me to play up to our love of the weird, the horrible, the awful part of life, almost as the tabloids do and the comics which seems to me to make this thing which could be, as I said at the beginning, a very effective instrument of enrichment, actually an instrument of degradation.

**Mr. Grant:** And yet, Mrs. Carey, you seem to find that within your own home, it doesn't all seem quite so horrible, and there are ways of taking care of that.

**Mrs. Carey:** Well, we find that

there are a great many other activities which frankly have a good bit more attraction for us than television. For example, we have a basketball game that goes on almost every night in the neighborhood and when that's going on no one in the area turns on television sets at all—not only in our home but in all the other homes in the block.

Also we have found, especially since Christmas time, that where we get together playing games which require a certain amount of skill, and which regardless of age give us a chance to really match our abilities one against the other, we have a creative satisfaction which very frankly television doesn't always give us. So, in turn, when we do go to television we enjoy it for what it does give us.

**Mr. Grant:** Well now, each week on Town Meeting we ask all of our speakers to discuss one question sent in by a listener. We feel that this gives all of our listeners a chance to participate directly in Town Meeting and this week the question chosen as most appropriate by our program staff comes from Mrs. Joseph N. Fineberg, 2619 Sorento Road, Philadelphia 31, Pennsylvania. A set of the American People's Encyclopedia is on its way to you, Mrs. Fineberg. The question is this: "Can television truly consider the public, when its first obligation is to the sponsors, their products, and to the type of audience who might buy?" Let me present that question first to Mr. Hardy.

**Mr. Hardy:** I'll be glad to tackle that. In the final analysis, the interest of the operators of radio and television stations in terms of the public are basically no different than the interests of the spon-



sor. No sponsor willingly puts on and pays for a program that he knows is going to alienate people in terms of their good will and their willingness to buy the product or service which he has to sell.

Now, one of the great voids in this whole picture, and one which I think we should forthrightly examine, is that the channels of communication between the users of radio and television programs and those who pay the bills for the sponsorship of the overwhelming number of programs that we hear are not too clear—they're not too well opened. You frequently hear, for example, the average person say, "Why I'd never think of writing a letter or expressing myself favorably or unfavorably about a program"; but I assure you from the point of view of an individual who's had many, many years of experience in the broadcasting business that a well written observation from a listener carries a tremendous amount of weight.

I think the average radio and television station operator, as well as the average sponsor, would say, "Let us know how you feel about it." So I believe the answer to that question is that the interests of the sponsor in terms of the public and the interests of the television operator in terms of the public are basically the same.

**Mr. Grant:** Thank you very much, Mr. Hardy. Is there anything that Mrs. Carey or Mr. Harrington would like to contribute in the way of a different kind of answer to that question? Mrs. Carey?

**Mrs. Carey:** Well, I do feel that so far we people have not always taken advantage of what we might do in the way of suggestions. I think Mr. Hardy talks about sug-

gestions that we could make about programs. If we object to a given program it seems to me that in addition to stating the reasons for our objections we might possibly come up with some constructive suggestion as to what we would prefer to have, instead. I don't believe many of us have made our thoughts on this clear, as yet, to the sponsors or to the stations.

**Mr. Harrington:** If I might add a word, I think that the sponsors are overly conservative. They seem to rely on the same kind of programs that actually have been going on radio for years. The things that I seem to hear are these rather vacuous programs—just to get a lot of laughs—the same old gags we've been hearing for years, the crime programs, the soap operas. This is tried and tested, and the sponsors don't seem to me to have an adequate sense of responsibility, so far as the terrific impact of this new medium is concerned.

I think that if they were to undertake some creative and fresh programs, let us say, in the whole field of human relations, helping people to understand how best to meet the complicated situations of life and, perhaps, to play out different ways of meeting situations that cause difficulty for most people, they'd find a tremendous interest in that kind of program and they would find a great appreciation on the part of average people. If only they tried to make interesting something that was worth while, but unfortunately it seems to me that there is no spirit of adventure in this very young industry, and I'm *sorry* to see that.

**Mr. Grant:** Mr. Harrington, a moment ago you did apply, I believe, for the first time this evening the same criticism to television as to radio. That does not apply to



all of this you've been saying tonight? Is that correct? You didn't get rid of your radio set two months after you bought it too, did you?

**Mr. Harrington:** No, but I think the radio, movies, and television have had the same effect of making people spectators rather than participants in more and more areas of their lives. (*applause*)

**Mr. Grant:** Thank you, Mr. Harrington. Now that a set of the American People's Encyclopedia is on its way to the Fineberg home in Philadelphia for sending in that question, we come to our two guest interrogators who have been listening most intently to this discussion. I am sure that Mrs. Vincent Winkopp, mother of four, who told us that she fought against television for a long while and then found that she had been wrong, has some searching questions to ask particularly of Mr. Harrington; and we want to hear also from Mr. George Y. Wells, newspaperman, who described his two children to us as victims of television. So you can see where he stands. Mrs. Winkopp first.

**Mrs. Winkopp:** Mr. Harrington, you spoke a few minutes ago of children and parents being together physically, watching television. Don't you think that it's also possible for their minds to be together on a good many programs that you watch — some of the science programs, even the little zoo programs that the little ones watch? Don't you think it's possible for parents and children then to discuss the ramifications of these programs later and so to enrich their lives and their minds by watching that kind of program?

**Mr. Harrington:** Yes, it's possible, but how often does it actually happen? How often do a

father and mother and their children sit down and discuss and evaluate a program that they have looked at together? If that happened every time; if all of our schools had sessions in which the teachers tried to help their children to understand, how to evaluate a program, and which programs to listen to that would be one thing; but it seems to me that the actual number of families you would find doing what you've just described would be pretty small. On the other hand, the number of families in which you see those pathetic little figures half listless, half rapt, sitting for endless hours before the television sets because they're good baby-sitters would be very large.

**Mr. Grant:** I think the interrogator has been interrogated. Mrs. Winkopp, how often have you seen it happen?

**Mrs. Winkopp:** Well, I think that those of us who manage our television watching as we do our movie going, those of us who supervise the movies our children see, who supervise the books our children read, I think we're the same parents who supervise the television programs that our children watch, and we make it possible for them to watch programs with us that we can discuss afterward.

**Mr. Grant:** Well, now, how about Mr. George Y. Wells, who considers his children victims of television? Do you have a question, Mr. Wells?

**Mr. Wells:** Well, I would like to — this problem of supervision interests me. I'll leave that aside for a moment. I would like to know really how Mrs. Carey eliminated this problem of television, once the decision has been made to buy the instrument. It seems to

me that all family conferences and discussions of "shall we do this?" sort of go out the window in favor of "Sh-h, Daddy, I'm listening to this." Even if you are together physically as has been mentioned in this rapt position, you cannot even pause to, maybe, make a comment on a show without getting a "Sh-h." I think it drives the family apart and I would like to know, aside from say basketball and outdoors—I happen to live on 8th street where there are no nearby basketball courts — how you achieve that, Mrs. Carey?

**Mrs. Carey:** Well, before we bought a television set, we went into a long study together as to what type of television set we wanted and once we got it how much time we thought we could spend on it and how we'd do the scheduling of programs. We found that we came out with a policy where television would be something that we would see provided each of us had the *time* to see it each day.

In other words provided, by the time the children came home from school and my husband came back from his office and what not, we had some spare moments then we could watch television. But if we found that the children had not covered their homework, or taken care of the rooms which they're responsible for, or done some of the other jobs which we all share in together, then obviously television would not be available that day. So we had certain understandings about it which had been covered and agreed upon by all of us before we actually had a set, and that eliminated a great deal of fracas afterward.

**Mr. Grant:** Mr. Harrington has something I believe he would like to add to that.

**Mr. Harrington:** Well, we tried to do all of this too. The trouble was that there were a number of things that we didn't foresee. For example, you can get agreement that each child will watch the television for one hour or two hours a day. Then they come up with the fact that they don't want to watch the same programs, so it turns out that the television set, by a little careful manipulation, can be on for four hours a day, and, after all, you can't stop a child from walking through the living room. Then the question finally becomes a question of whether father and mother can become a mediation board every afternoon and go through the whole process of mediating which programs are to be listened to and when, all over again every day. It seems to me that it sounds pretty good, but I didn't find it quite so easy.

**Mr. Grant:** Thank you very much. Mrs. Winkopp, I believe, was about to present another question to our guests here.

**Mrs. Winkopp:** I'd like to ask Mr. Harrington again if you think that you're being unduly severe on television in expecting it to take the place of all other activities in the home and to do all things for all people. Don't you think that it can enrich a certain part of children's lives, especially for those children who are city children, perhaps, and cannot see too much of the country, and country children who don't see too much of the city?

**Mr. Harrington:** Well, I think it *could*, you see on this I would really agree with you. I feel sure that television *could* enrich American home life, but what I'm merely saying is that it doesn't, and I don't see very much evidence yet that it's going to. Actually what

happens is that it seems to me it is usurping these other activities and the time that used to be given to them.

I wonder how many families there actually are in which there is a creative effort to make music together, in which there is playing together of games of fathers and mothers and children, in which they perhaps do writing together, or practice together the art of good conversation which, incidentally, is becoming a lost art today. Is it really helping in that way? That's the question I seem to find. Well, perhaps it's the fault of the people as a whole. We're just not using it intelligently. Maybe that's the real problem, but if so it is a real problem.

**Mr. Grant:** Mr. Hardy, several moments ago you pointed out how the advent of television had more or less forced motion pictures into a great state of improvement. Do you feel that that perhaps might be applied to some of the questions that have been brought up here tonight?

**Mr. Hardy:** Well, let me say this, Mr. Grant. I think that people all over the country should appreciate and recognize this fact, that in the very newness of television, and in the tremendous consumption of program material required to sustain, shall we say, an average of 18 hours a day on some 110 television stations in the country, the industry is deeply conscious, itself, of the need for basic improvement in many of the program techniques and in many of the program offerings.

I think it is with some encour-

agement that we look upon the fact that the overwhelming number of television stations in the country have voluntarily without government pressure adopted a television code of practices as a guide for their over-all operation. No one solves problems overnight by codes, but it does indicate an awareness on the part of the people into whose hands these franchises have been placed from year to year as the basis of the licenses at the present time, that they have a tremendous social instrumentality in their hands, one that goes far beyond the ordinary confines of the usual business operation in America.

I believe that we're going to see an upgrading and an improvement and a better knowledge of how to use the art. What troubles me is that so many parents who are so critical of television, themselves, are completely unacquainted with what there is available on television. They talk in generalities about large blocks of crime programs and large blocks of Westerns, but you put questions to them about public service programs, news programs, drama programs, historical interest programs and in many cases you draw a total blank from them. They never knew they were there. Now I think we've got to develop high selectivity as parents in order to be good guides in our homes. (*applause*)

**Mr. Grant:** Thank you, Mr. Hardy. Now let's continue with questions from our New York audience. The first question is coming from a young man at our microphone now.



# QUESTIONS, PLEASE!

*Man:* Mrs. Carey, don't you think that there are too many comical programs on television and things for enjoyment?

*Mrs. Carey:* I think again that's a matter of individual taste. The wonderful thing about television is that you can always tune out the thing that you don't want and get in something or other else. I assume if they are there, it must be because certain audiences like them there.

*Mr. Grant:* You mean there's not too much comedy for those who like comedy?

*Mrs. Carey:* That's right. Good question.

*Mr. Grant:* Thank you, Mrs. Carey. The next lady has a question.

*Lady:* This question is for Mr. Harrington. Since too much emphasis is put on the youngsters, while older people are neglected and have no entertainment, would it be possible to have suitable programs for them?

*Mr. Harrington:* Well, I think there isn't any reason why with a little more ingenuity and creativity there shouldn't be very many more suitable programs for older people. Once again I think that we're beginning to see that this industry is overly conservative today and perhaps we will see an upgrading or a little more adventuring in new kinds of programs to meet special needs of people. Once again I feel that there is a tremendous potential. I just don't see enough evidence yet that it is going to be realized. If people like you make the definite request for such programs and make your voices

heard, I'm sure that they will be effective.

*Mr. Grant:* And you might get your set back. The next gentleman has a question for Mrs. Carey.

*Man:* It is often said that we are becoming a nation of sitters. Would it be possible to have programs which would induce people to be active doers of one sort or another?

*Mrs. Carey:* Well, I had heard that comment about people sitting and getting eyes the size of cantaloupes and empty heads. Is that the comment you're talking about? But of course my whole training was one where we believed very much, as children growing up, that you should use your eyes wherever possible and that there was no fear of over-learning through your eyes, also your ears. Those of you who read our books remember that that was one of the things that we were taught as youngsters—to see and to learn through seeing. So I personally have to smile at that comment when I hear it.

*Mr. Grant:* Well, I believe that the gentleman also was perhaps suggesting, Mrs. Carey, that there might perhaps be programs in which those right in the living room could in some way participate, and for someone as creative as you, Mrs. Carey, having read your books I think that might be something for you to work on.

*Mrs. Carey:* Well I think that without any question there are a good many suggestions that could be made about programs geared to the family where children could actually participate. For example, a program where a typical family

each week entertained a different type of guest, a fine guest, a scientist guest, the children sharing in making him feel at home—the guest, in turn, acquainting the children with things. I think that would give the type of participation you have in mind.

*Mr. Grant:* This lady has a question for Mr. Hardy.

*Lady:* Mr. Hardy, is the television industry working actively at present with any persons in the school system to utilize television in early childhood education?

*Mr. Hardy:* Yes, there is a good deal of activity in that field and not alone on the side of the commercial industry. You perhaps know that the Federal Communications Commission has set aside a substantial number of allocations in the television frequency for the use of educators, and I might say, parenthetically, that the commercial industry is looking with a good deal of interest to see what kinds of new programs the educators will produce which will be a substantial change from the type of thing that many of them have complained about in commercial television.

It's important, too, to recognize that when you begin to program for a very young child you do reach a very highly specialized type of program and one on which we have discovered we need the expert guidance of child psychologists and others who are equipped to give guidance in that field.

*Mr. Grant:* And now a gentleman with a question for Mr. Harrington.

*Man:* Mr. Harrington, do you think that TV is keeping people away from the churches?

*Mr. Harrington:* No, I don't think that TV is keeping people

away from the churches, nor do I think it will. I think, as a matter of fact, it might interest people in churches, people who haven't been there for a long time. This is one of the aspects in which I think TV might be helpful if it were used a little more frequently and were a little more accessible, and certainly for people who can't get out to church. To people who are sick or shut in, it could be a very, very great help.

*Mr. Grant:* Thank you. And now a lady with a question for Mrs. Carey.

*Lady:* Mrs. Carey, can you suggest a method of rationing television time for youngsters from 6 to 12 years old?

*Mrs. Carey:* I think again the rationing would have to be figured by the individual family, with the youngsters of that age sharing in the decision. I think it's something that only that family and the members of that family could answer.

*Mr. Grant:* And now a gentleman with a question for Mr. Hardy.

*Man:* Mr. Hardy, why can't we have more educational television programs?

*Mr. Hardy:* The answer to that, sir, is bound up in the question of what constitutes an educational program. There are some who would limit the definition to a program actually sponsored by an institution of higher learning. I think the American people, who by and large have been educated by a variety of experiences, would not accept such a limited definition.

The fact is that a great many of the programs which we class as entertainment have a very high educational value. I might just point out very quickly, we found our son just before Christmas writing a letter, not to Santa

Claus but to his Congressman, asking if he could please, for the one thing he most wanted for Christmas, have two tickets for the opening of Congress. He's interested in Congress because he's watched Congressional proceedings on television. That to me is of very high educational value.

*Mr. Grant:* Excuse me just a moment. I wonder if our guest interrogator, Mr. Wells, was listening to that one? Would that make them victims of Congress then, Mr. Wells?

*Mr. Wells:* Well, I don't know about that. I'm encouraged that such a thing can happen. I still would like to ask Mr. Hardy, my fellow Utahan, a question about the TV industry. Can you say that with all the experience they've had to go on, thus the newspaper as one medium, the radio, the movie—all have gone before—they seem to have been more than conservative, they seem to have been absolutely indifferent, I say, to experiences of these earlier media.

Thus anybody knows in the newspaper business that not many readers write letters to the editor telling him that they want a better newspaper. Similarly, I don't see why the listener who is more or less a captive of TV should have

to be a program director. Can you say commercials are any better, can you say programs are any better, can you say that a medium which is now transferring the thud of the blackjack from the sound effect to the eye effect has shown any imagination at all?

*Mr. Hardy:* I would have to disagree in part with what you're attempting to get me to say yes to. I would say that there has been a tremendous improvement just within the last year, for example, in the programming techniques of television. After all, you must remember that the industry when it started out, just a matter of a few years back, you talk about taking advantage of the experience of other media, to the extent that it could it did, for example specifically in the field you're in in, news reporting, in what would be typical of a feature story, there was a great deal of carry-over that would apply there.

*Mr. Grant:* Thank you very much, Mr. Hardy. I'm sorry I have to stop it now. Thank you, Mr. Hardy, Mrs. Carey, Mr. Harrington, Mrs. Winkopp, and Mr. Wells, for your discussion of tonight's topic. So plan to be with us next week and every week at the sound of the Crier's Bell.

## THE SPEAKERS' COLUMN

(Continued from page 2)

Rev. Vilma Szantho, first woman ever to be ordained to the ministry in Central Europe. Returning to America, Mr. Harrington was called to the Pulpit of the Peoples Liberal Church of Chicago where he quickly became known as a preacher and community organizer. He came to the Community Church of New York as the Junior Colleague in 1944. Five years later he was unanimously elected minister by the church congregation.

*Parent Interrogators:*

**MRS. VINCENT WINKOPP**—Professional Public Relations Director, mother of four; enthusiastic about television.

**MR. GEORGE Y. WELLS**—Journalist and father of two victims of television.

*Moderator:* **TAYLOR GRANT**—ABC news commentator.



# FOR FURTHER STUDY OF THIS WEEK'S TOPIC

## *Background Questions*

1. What kind of impact has television had on the American social scene?
  - a. Has televising become the major form of leisure activity?
  - b. Has T. V. noticeably altered theater and movie going, reading, dressing habits, etc.?
  - c. Is T. V. likely to make us a nation of passive spectators?
  - d. Has participation in civic and community activities been affected by televising?
  - e. Has T. V.'s coverage of political events increased political awareness?
2. What kind of impact has television had on the American home?
  - a. Have the established home leisure habits of the American family undergone much change?
  - b. Has it resulted in more—or less—visiting and good conversation in the home?
  - c. Can T. V. serve to bring the family closer together by providing a common source of interest and entertainment in the home?
3. Does any particular age group within the family rely on television more heavily as a leisure time activity?
  - a. If so, which one?
  - b. Is this because special programs for that age group predominate, or because of the specific needs of the group?
  - c. How has television affected the problems of the aged, the housewife, the young child, the teenager, couples with small children, small income families, etc.
4. What will determine the amount and character of the influence of television on children?
  - a. How does T. V. affect children's outdoor play, eating habits, emotional well-being, reading and study habits, sense of values, etc.?
  - b. Is children's televising excessive in most American homes? If so, is it the fault of the medium, the character of family life, or the lack of regulation?
  - c. Are T. V. programs too violent, sensational and stimulating for children?
  - d. Is the child's need for escape from reality a healthy need?
  - e. Is excessive televising of some children symptomatic of emotional disturbance?

5. Is all the parental anxiety about television expressed during recent years justified?
  - a. Are parents really worried about the effect of T. V. on the child, or does it represent one more factor that threatens their ability to control or influence their children?
  - b. Can a parent isolate his child from T. V. without isolating him from friends and relatives?
  - c. Will the absence of T. V. in his home make him feel deprived and overly dependent on his friends?
6. Does T. V. present family problems different or more serious than those presented by radio or movies?
7. Is it the medium itself that is so distressing to its critics, or the character of the programs and the advertising?
  - a. Are most viewers getting what they want in the way of programs?
  - b. Have T. V. programs been improving or deteriorating?
  - c. Can commercial stations be relied on to give quality programs with educational value?
  - d. How can viewers bring about improvement in T. V. fare? e. g. letter writing, Listeners Councils, etc.
  - e. Have educators been apathetic about T. V. and its potential? Or, are they too poor and inexperienced to take advantage of the frequencies set aside for educational stations?
  - f. Would subscription television satisfy some of the demands for better programs?
  - g. Is government participation feasible or desirable in the field of T. V. production?
8. What is the value of the current House subcommittee investigation into the effect of radio and T. V. programs on juvenile delinquency, loose morals and crime?
9. Can T. V. programs be improved by government legislation without introducing thought control or censorship?
10. Why are there so few new, experimental programs on the air?
  - a. Is the necessity for the broadest possible audience for advertising purposes responsible?
  - b. Or, is the increasing fear of criticism from the various pressure groups in the community stifling all experimentation?